

Time is of the essence. I urge your support for H.R. 3150. Making American air travel as safe and secure as possible is one of our Nation's top priorities. Last month, I proposed dramatic changes to our aviation security system: full Federal control of airport security and screening services; major expansion of the Federal Air Marshal program; and substantial new funding for aircraft security modifications. H.R. 3150 would accomplish these important initiatives and improve security quickly and effectively.

Both my proposal and H.R. 3150 give the Federal Government immediate and comprehensive control of aviation security. A new Transportation Security Agency, housed at the Department of Transportation, will hire Federal employees to supervise, manage, and train all passenger and baggage screeners. The new Security Agency would also establish and enforce new qualification standards for screeners, perform background checks on all screeners and other persons with access to secure areas at airports, and provide a uniformed Federal law enforcement presence at commercial airports.

Significantly, H.R. 3150 leaves the Federal Government the flexibility to build the best workforce to perform the actual screening function—another key element of my proposal. This model of Federal control plus flexibility mirrors the well-regarded airline security systems in place in many European countries, which involve public/private partnerships. Many adopted this model of strong government oversight over high-quality private security companies after finding other models of airline security to be less effective.

Other legislative proposals would mandate that all passenger and baggage screeners *must* be Federal workers in all circumstances. Such an inflexible, one-size-fits-all requirement fails to permit security tailored to the very different circumstances that exist at airports across the country. I am pleased that Chairman Young and the co-sponsors of H.R. 3150 have chosen not to limit the Administration's options in choosing the strongest possible means to protect Americans who travel by air. Giving the Government the flexibility to use private contractors will facilitate transition to the new system, promote better screening services

through competition, and ensure that security managers can move swiftly to discipline or remove employees who fail to live up to the rigorous new standards.

The American people deserve a quick and smooth transition to a better aviation security system. I urge the House to pass H.R. 3150 as soon as possible; and my Administration looks forward to continuing to work with the Congress on any refinements that may be necessary to ensure that the Nation's aviation security needs are addressed in the most effective manner possible.

Sincerely,

George W. Bush

Remarks on Signing the USA PATRIOT ACT of 2001

October 26, 2001

Good morning and welcome to the White House. Today we take an essential step in defeating terrorism, while protecting the constitutional rights of all Americans. With my signature, this law will give intelligence and law enforcement officials important new tools to fight a present danger.

I commend the House and Senate for the hard work they put into this legislation. Members of Congress and their staffs spent long nights and weekends to get this important bill to my desk. I appreciate their efforts and bipartisanship in passing this new law.

I want to thank the Vice President and his staff for working hard to make sure this law was passed. I want to thank the Secretary of State and the Secretary of Treasury for being here, both of whom lead important parts of our war against terrorism. I want to thank Attorney General John Ashcroft for spending a lot of time on the Hill to make the case for a balanced piece of legislation. I want to thank the Director of the FBI and the Director of the CIA for waging an incredibly important part on the two-front war, one overseas and a front here at home.

I want to thank Governor Tom Ridge for his leadership. I want to thank the Members of Congress who are here on the stage, the leaders, on this impressive effort: Senator

Hatch and Senator Leahy and Senator Sarbanes and Senator Graham and Senator Reid.

I also want to thank Representative Porter Goss, LaFalce, Oxley, and Sensenbrenner for their hard work. And I want to welcome the men and women of law enforcement who are here in the White House with us today, as well.

The changes, effective today, will help counter a threat like no other our Nation has ever faced. We've seen the enemy and the murder of thousands of innocent, unsuspecting people. They recognize no barrier of morality. They have no conscience. The terrorists cannot be reasoned with. Witness the recent anthrax attacks through our Postal Service.

Our country is grateful for the courage the Postal Service has shown during these difficult times. We mourn the loss of the lives of Thomas Morris and Joseph Curseen, postal workers who died in the line of duty. And our prayers go to their loved ones.

I want to assure postal workers that our Government is testing more than 200 postal facilities along the entire eastern corridor that may have been impacted. And we will move quickly to treat and protect workers where positive exposures are found.

But one thing is for certain: These terrorists must be pursued; they must be defeated; and they must be brought to justice. And that is the purpose of this legislation. Since the 11th of September, the men and women of our intelligence and law enforcement agencies have been relentless in their response to new and sudden challenges.

We have seen the horrors terrorists can inflict. We may never know what horrors our country was spared by the diligent and determined work of our police forces, the FBI, ATF agents, Federal marshals, custom officers, Secret Service, intelligence professionals, and local law enforcement officials. Under the most trying conditions, they are serving this country with excellence and often with bravery.

They deserve our full support and every means of help that we can provide. We're dealing with terrorists who operate by highly sophisticated methods and technologies, some of which were not even available when

our existing laws were written. The bill before me takes account of the new realities and dangers posed by modern terrorists. It will help law enforcement to identify, to dismantle, to disrupt, and to punish terrorists before they strike.

For example, this legislation gives law enforcement officials better tools to put an end to financial counterfeiting, smuggling, and money laundering. Secondly, it gives intelligence operations and criminal operations the chance to operate not on separate tracks but to share vital information so necessary to disrupt a terrorist attack before it occurs.

As of today, we're changing the laws governing information-sharing. And as importantly, we're changing the culture of our various agencies that fight terrorism. Countering and investigating terrorist activity is the number one priority for both law enforcement and intelligence agencies.

Surveillance of communications is another essential tool to pursue and stop terrorists. The existing law was written in the era of rotary telephones. This new law that I sign today will allow surveillance of all communications used by terrorists, including e-mails, the Internet, and cell phones. As of today, we'll be able to better meet the technological challenges posed by this proliferation of communications technology.

Investigations are often slowed by limit on the reach of Federal search warrants. Law enforcement agencies have to get a new warrant for each new district they investigate, even when they're after the same suspect. Under this new law, warrants are valid across all districts and across all States.

And finally, the new legislation greatly enhances the penalties that will fall on terrorists or anyone who helps them. Current statutes deal more severely with drug-traffickers than with terrorists. That changes today. We are enacting new and harsh penalties for possession of biological weapons. We're making it easier to seize the assets of groups and individuals involved in terrorism. The Government will have wider latitude in deporting known terrorists and their supporters. The statute of limitations on terrorist acts will be lengthened, as will prison sentences for terrorists.

This bill was carefully drafted and considered. Led by the Members of Congress on this stage and those seated in the audience, it was crafted with skill and care, determination and a spirit of bipartisanship for which the entire Nation is grateful. This bill met with an overwhelming—overwhelming—agreement in Congress because it upholds and respects the civil liberties guaranteed by our Constitution.

This legislation is essential not only to pursuing and punishing terrorists but also preventing more atrocities in the hands of the evil ones. This Government will enforce this law with all the urgency of a nation at war. The elected branches of our Government and both political parties are united in our resolve to find and stop and punish those who would do harm to the American people.

It is now my honor to sign into law the USA PATRIOT ACT of 2001.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:49 a.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Thomas L. Morris, Jr., and Joseph P. Curseen, Jr., postal workers at the Brentwood postal facility in Washington, DC, who died as a result of anthrax infections contracted from contaminated mail processed at the facility. H.R. 3162, Uniting and Strengthening America By Providing Appropriate Tools Required To Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism (USA PATRIOT ACT) Act of 2001, approved October 26, was assigned Public Law No. 107-56.

Remarks to Business, Trade, and Agricultural Leaders

October 26, 2001

Thank you for that warm welcome, and welcome to the White House. I appreciate you giving us a chance to share with you our strategy on how we're going to win the war against terror.

It starts with assembling a good team, and I put together a fabulous administration. I picked a great Vice President in Dick Cheney. Some of you may know him. *[Laughter]* But I know him a man who gives solid advice, and he's got great judgment. And the Nation's lucky that he left the—left his previous occupation to serve our country.

I'm also pleased to be joined by three members of my Cabinet who are all involved

with shepherding through an economic stimulus plan through the United States Congress. Secretary Paul O'Neill is doing a fabulous job. I've got great confidence in Paul and his ability to sell to the American people and to the United States Congress that which we're trying to do to make sure our economy grows. And I want to thank you, Paul, for your service, as well.

Bob Zoellick is traveling the world promoting free trade. I'll talk a little bit about trade later on. But I want to thank his tireless efforts. One thing that we're all hopeful for is that we start a new round of WTO talks at Doha, Qatar. And Bob's working hard to make that happen. I just have come from China, as you know, and he proceeded me there, and they were still talking about the Zoellick touch. *[Laughter]*

And I want to thank Spence Abraham, as well, who's helping us shepherd a realistic energy plan through the United States Congress. So thank you all for being here.

We are at the beginning of what I view as a very long struggle against evil. We're not fighting a nation; we're not fighting a religion; we're fighting evil. And we have no choice but to prevail. We're fighting people that hate our values. They can't stand what America stands for. And they really don't like the fact that we exist. And I want to assure you all that we will fight this fight on every front. We will use every resource we have. And there is no doubt in my time—in my mind—that in our time, we will prevail. There's no doubt.

And we're fighting this war on a variety of fronts. We've put together a vast coalition of nations to slowly but surely encircle those who would terrorize and to send the message that their actions will not stand. I really appreciate the hard work of the Secretary of State Powell. He is working endlessly to not only keep a coalition together but to broaden it. And it's working—and it's working.

We're fighting them on a financial front. We're choking off their money. We're seizing their assets. We will be relentless as we pursue their sources of financing. And I want to thank the Secretary of Treasury for leading that effort.

We're sharing intelligence, because in order to fight a war—the new war of the 21st